A HALF-CENTURY IN BURMA

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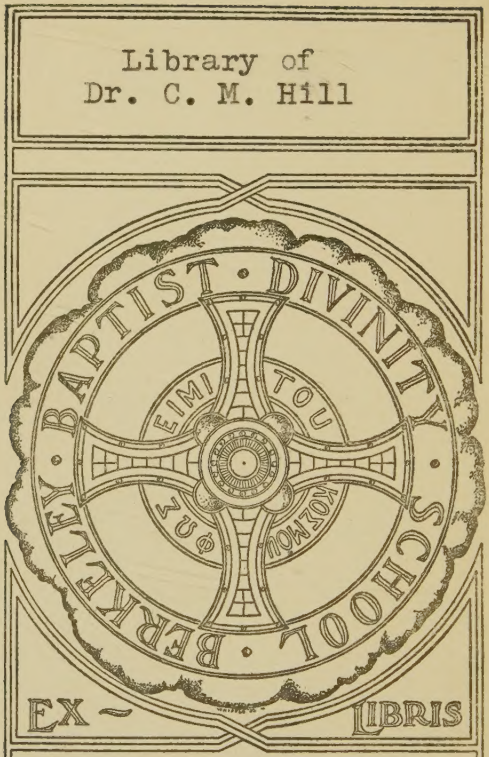

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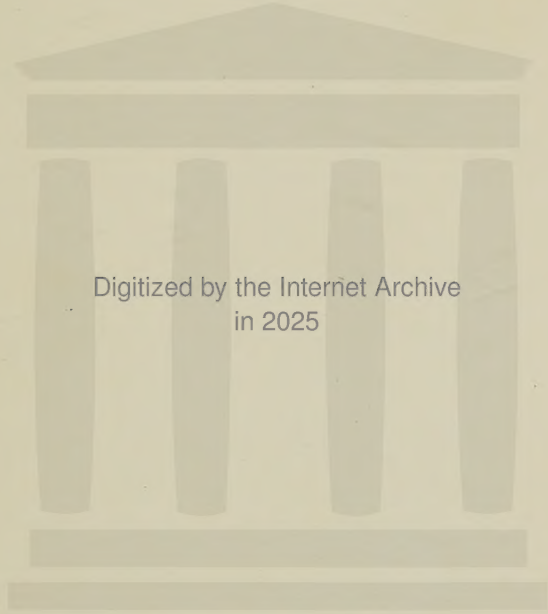

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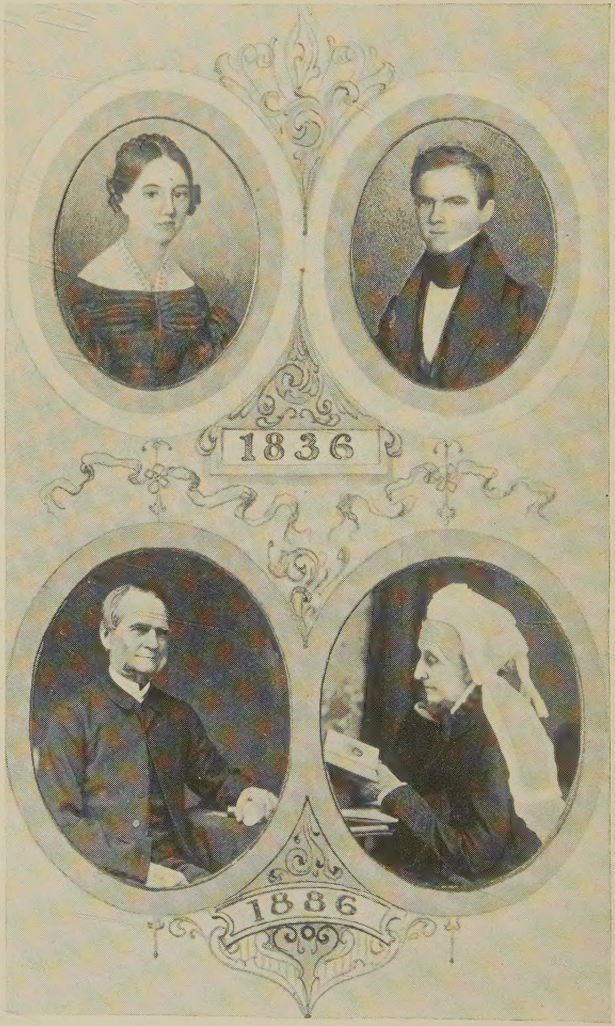

DR. AND MRS. E. A. STEVENS.

Clay McNeill
with the love of the author

A

HALF-CENTURY IN BURMA

A MEMORIAL SKETCH OF
EDWARD ABIEL STEVENS, D. D.

BY
SUMNER WYNNE STEVENS

The image of my father, my revered, kind, learned, simple-hearted father, is a religion to me.

—*Coleridge*

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From the Society's own Press

INTRODUCTORY

And he shewed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Rev. 22 : 1.

FROM before the enraptured eye of the exiled apostle the impenetrable veil which conceals from human view the New Jerusalem had been drawn aside and he was permitted to look upon its splendor. He beheld its light like unto a stone most precious, its jasper walls, its pavement golden, and its radiant gates of pearl. He saw too, amid the beauty of the celestial city, the river of the water of life, a crystal stream of transparent purity. Through the midst of the street of the city it flowed, its source the throne of God and the Lamb, while on either bank was the tree of life whose leaves were for the healing of the nations. A sweet and lovely scene was this, disclosed to the vision of the seer.

I have been shown a river of life, clear and crystalline ; a stream not free from earthy particles, but one, notwithstanding, that was remarkably transparent in its purity and simplicity. Like the heavenly river, its flow was out from the throne of God and the Lamb; for it was a life whose springs were in Jehovah ; one that was hid with Christ in God. Moreover, the influences which went out from that life, the trees as it

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were that drew moisture from it and flourished on either side thereof, bore leaves which were for the healing of the nations, and which were the means of giving recovery of sight to eyes blinded by spiritual darkness and sinful superstition.

It is not out of place that I use this figure of the river, as I preface what I would tell concerning the manner of life of one who for nearly half a century was a missionary to the Burmans, my godly, sainted father.

S. W. S.

PHILADELPHIA, *January*, 1897.

A HALF-CENTURY IN BURMA

THE subject of this brief memorial came of godly and missionary ancestry. His grandfather, the Rev. Josiah Stevens, was a missionary in the employ of the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and as a "pious minister of Jesus Christ" labored on the Isle of Shoals, off the coast of New Hampshire.

Oliver, the second son of this missionary pastor, eventually made his home in the South and became the proprietor of a plantation in Georgia. There he married and on January 23, 1814, about two years after Adoniram Judson sailed for Burma, there was born to this Christian couple, on a place then called Haynes Plantation, near Sunbury, Liberty County, Ga., a babe who was in after years to prove a valued co-laborer of that pioneer missionary on far-off heathen shores. The boy was named Edward Abiel and was the fifth child of his parents. It is very interesting to note that in his infancy the child was consecrated by his mother to foreign mission service. Of this consecration my father learned in later years from the lips of one who had known his mother before her death, and I will let him tell the story in his own words: "I met," he says, "in Albany, Georgia (in 1875), with a lady who during the war of the rebellion became acquainted with

my mother. That lady told me that my mother frequently spoke to her of her missionary son and mentioned to her that shortly after my birth a minister came to her house, when, holding me in her arms she requested him to offer a prayer of consecration of me for her to the missionary service, and that the minister did as she requested."

The gift of the noble-hearted mother God accepted, and the heart of the boy Edward was early inclined toward the work to which his manhood was devoted. He was naturally of a religious disposition and at the age of thirteen experienced conversion. He was baptized in November, 1827, into the fellowship of the Baptist church in Sunbury, Georgia.

Shortly subsequent to his baptism Edward was offered a home in the family of the late Henry J. Ripley, D. D., who was for many years an honored professor in the Newton Theological Institution. The proffer was accepted and young Stevens came North. In his new home Edward was the recipient of every kindness at the hands both of Dr. Ripley and Mrs. Ripley, who was his aunt. He prepared for college under the tuition of Dr. Ripley and entered Brown University in September, 1829. He took high rank in his class for scholarship and was graduated with honor in 1833. During one period of his college course he had some remarkable religious experiences, which led him into a more perfect realization of the nature of true faith and a more complete and thorough consecration of himself to the service of his Lord. After the conclusion of his

college course Mr. Stevens entered the Baptist Theological Seminary at Newton, and was graduated thence in 1836.

My father from the earliest childhood felt an especial interest in the subject of missions, and during the years of his college career this feeling was deepened; but it was not until the middle year of his seminary course that he fully decided upon the foreign field as the scene of his labors. The reasons which finally led to this decision, which he considered the most important of his life, I will give in his own words. He says: "What led me to that decision probably were *three things*. (1) The deep interest which from so early a period and for so long a time I had felt in the subject, seeming to indicate a special call of God to the work. (2) The fact so clearly taught in the Epistle to the Romans that the heathen are in perishing need of the gospel, and the duty therefore that Christians should take it to them. (3) And thirdly, after earnest prayer and the best reflection I could give to the subject, I came to see that I was at liberty to choose that work for my life-work." And he adds: "I therefore at once said 'I choose,' and settled my mind on that work." His proffer of service to the Missionary Union was accepted and he was appointed a missionary June 27, 1836. "And so I became a missionary," he writes, "but I did not wish to go alone." And alone he did not go; for during his residence in the vicinity of Boston he had made the acquaintance of Miss Elizabeth Lincoln Haven, a daughter of Calvin Haven,

Esq., an old-time Boston merchant of sterling integrity and unswerving honesty in all his business relations. Miss Haven was also the niece of Lucy Lane Lincoln, first wife of the late Francis Wayland, D. D., sometime President of Brown University. The acquaintance of the young Southerner with the Puritan maiden deepened into mutual love. They were betrothed, and were married on the fifth of October, 1837, in the Lynde Street home of the bride. The union proved a singularly happy one, not only of hand but of heart; not alone of soul but of sentiment likewise; and for nearly fifty years Elizabeth Haven was the loving companion, the tender sympathizer, and efficient helper, of her missionary husband. And to-day in far-off Burma, in a calm, sweet eventide she quietly listens for the dip of the boatman's oar that shall summon her to her beloved.

October 28, 1837, the young missionary, but twenty-three years of age, and his fair young bride, not yet twenty-one, were to embark for Moulmein ("Maulmain," as it used to be), Burma. The "Services at the Designation of Missionaries to the Burman Mission" were held in the Federal Street Baptist Church, Boston, Sabbath evening, October 22, 1837, and among those who participated in the exercises were Rev. Baron Stow, Rev. Dr. Sharp, Rev. Geo. B. Ide, and Rev. Prof. Ripley, all of sainted memory now. Among the hymns sung was the following, evidently written for the occasion and printed on the "Order of Services," which lies before me:

Go where idol gods unheeding
Burmans crowd the Salwen's side;
Go where souls for light are pleading,
Of the Lamp of Life denied.
Souls benighted,
Of the Lamp of Life denied.

Hear the cry for help prevailing
Over tempest, wind, and wave!
Full of agony and wailing—
Haste these dying souls to save.
Christian pilgrim,
Haste these dying souls to save.

Zion, send to every nation
Heralds of the Prince of Peace;
Spread the knowledge of salvation
Until sin and sorrow cease.
Pray, O Zion!
Pray till sin and sorrow cease.

They set sail upon the bark "Rosabella," a small vessel of three hundred tons burthen. With them, also bound for the same distant shores, were Rev. Lyman Stilson and wife, and Rev. D. L. Brayton and wife. As that little band of six young missionaries stood upon the deck of the "Rosabella" and watched the slowly receding shores of their native country, until at last the outmost verge of the horizon revealed no trace of land, what emotions must have filled their hearts! Between them and their destination rolled and moaned sixteen thousand miles of restless billow. But the winds and the waves had been given charge concerning the small bark

and at last she dropped anchor off Moulmein. Of that consecrated company of Christ's commissioners, but two now survive, viz., the Rev. D. L. Brayton, D. D., who still at an advanced age labors as a missionary to the Karens, and Mrs. Stevens, who makes her home with her eldest daughter, the wife of the Rev. D. A W. Smith, D. D. (a son of the late S. F. Smith, D. D.), President of the Karen Theological Seminary at Insein, near Rangoon.

Just here a few reminiscences of early days in Burma written by Mrs. Stevens and read at the Judson memorial services in Mandalay, November 1, 1890, will be of interest:

"My husband considered it one of the high privileges and rich blessings of his life, to have been intimately associated with Dr. Judson in work and his near neighbor during almost eleven years. Our first sight of the man whom we had long heard spoken of as 'the venerable missionary,' notwithstanding that he was then but forty-seven years of age, was his coming on board the 'Rosabella' with Dr. Osgood, as she passed up the Salwen on February 19, 1838. Of those who were thus welcomed, three are still here. Three of that mission company have met them above.

"Dr. Osgood was then mission printer at Moulmein. The printing office was in the same compound with the Burman chapel, and the three houses occupied by Dr. Judson, Dr. Osgood, and ourselves. On Dr. Osgood and his work I need not enlarge—his record is on high. But I have a most vivid impression of the close in-

timacy between the translator and the printer while the quarto edition of the Burman Bible was passing on to completion. I remember their starting off for their long, early morning walks, when their consultations by the way were of importance and are felt to this day. Dr. Osgood was a man wise in council and of most mild, Christian courtesy, as well as of activity, diligence, and firmness in what he considered right. One printing office rule, which was in force in those days, I recall with satisfaction—the employees, heathen and all, were assembled at seven A. M. daily for reading of Scripture and prayer. But times are changed in that as well as in many other respects; 'times' and wages too, how different! For instance, the foreman of the office, a most respectable Burman, who was rearing a large family, received twelve rupees a month as ample compensation for his services. (A rupee is about one-third of a dollar.)

"Dr. Osgood was an excellent singer, and having acquired Burmese well, was the leader of our chapel music. He also acted as an evangelist, making occasional jungle trips personally, besides feeling the care of supplying many of the needs of those who were away from town on constant preaching tours. Speaking of singing, Dr. Osgood was not the first missionary singer. Mr. and Mrs. Hancock and Mr. and Mrs. Cutter had preceded him, and to them was accorded the Burmese Christian's odium of a most serious innovation in public worship. Dr. Judson and the earlier missionaries could not sing, and so for years

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the Sabbath services were held without that delightful offering of praise. The Burmese associated the idea of music with theatricals, and considered it highly unbecoming in anything connected with serious religion.

"Dr. Judson composed that first hymn more nearly in accordance with the complicated style of Burmese poetry than any other now in our collections. Our ship's company reached Moulmein on Monday, and during the week we committed to memory the then unintelligible words of the first verse, that we might join in the singing on the following Sabbath. Mr. and Mrs. Abbott and Mr. and Mrs. Ingalls were at that time in Moulmein, but almost immediately left town, the former for Rangoon and the latter for Mergui.

"Our first port reached had been Amherst, and the pale, thin face of Mr. Haswell, as he was rowed out to our barque, is vividly before me now. He and Mr. Ingalls both looked as if they could not live six months longer, but many years of good work did they accomplish before they were called to their reward. Mr. Haswell's house was then of bamboo, but very cheerful-looking and convenient, and I was surprised and delighted that a 'basket house,' as in America I had heard it called, could be so pleasant. I was agreeably disappointed in many things at that time. What a vision of beauty was a baby boy creeping on the verandah. I had no idea so lovely a picture could be found in a heathen land as that fair, round-faced, black-eyed boy, offered to my delighted eyes. That baby,

with his sisters, became in after years the playmates of my own children, and still later, fellow-laborers in this land. I refer to the lamented James R. Haswell, whose usefulness as a missionary was early cut off by cholera in Moulmein.

"I will not attempt the giving of all the names held in precious remembrance. They are known to all lovers of missions. I will only mention Grover S. Comstock and his noble wife. Their lonely lives in Arakan have had little said in commemoration of them. They were a rare couple. Mr. Comstock's physique was magnificent—large, powerful, handsome, he was one to whom a British officer once playfully said, 'I should not like to meet you in single combat.' And his wife's appearance quite corresponded with his own. Their intelligence, piety, and devotedness to the hard service in the field assigned them equaled the expectations their looks awakened. Why was so much strength and zeal so soon laid low forever? We know not now. We may know hereafter.

"Although not requested to give reminiscences of Dr. Judson himself, I will venture to add a little one of his characteristics which I do not find enlarged upon in any of the memoirs which have been prepared. I refer to his great tenderness toward little children. How plainly can I see him with his clean little handkerchief wiping the eyes of a crying tot that had a tumble down, as our children ran in the dusty compound, which made tears and dust far from ornamental to the clean bit of cotton which he took from his pocket. He

was neat in the extreme, which made this noticeable. Indeed he considered his fastidiousness an easily besetting sin, which he struggled against in a country where it might interfere with the cheerfulness of his working.

"Mrs. Bennett tells of his touchingly making himself a child to sympathize with her wee Mary as she rocked her sick doll, mournfully saying, 'Teh nah dheh.'[1] He conversed in childish and feeling Burmese with her, in a tone Mrs. Bennett cannot forget, the while soothing the rag baby with his hand, saying, 'Teh pu dheh.'[2] His tenderness toward bereaved mothers, bereaved either by death or separation, was great, evinced either by sympathizing words or notes, and in one case by an act of thoughtfulness of which all visitors at Mrs. Bennett's may be reminded when they sit at her table and look at the portraits of two little girls high up on the wall before them. Fifty-five or more years ago Mrs. Bennett sent her two daughters, now Mrs. Northrup and Mrs. Ranney, to America by Dr. and Mrs. Wade. Dr. Judson secretly sent word to have the picture painted and sent out as a surprise to their mother's lonely heart.

"Dr. Judson's ready wit and his powers of mimicry, aided by the expressiveness of his fine face, together with his remarkable memory, rendered his conversation most entertaining. He could repeat, on the instant, an old ballad which he had read or heard many years before, perhaps but once, which would come in so

[1] Very sick. [2] Very hot.

appropriately that it would seem to have been written for the very occasion which called it to mind. He appeared to have read everything ever printed. He had the faculty of skimming through a book, getting all the cream of it in an incredibly short time, and then it was ever after his own for use at a moment's command. Another peculiarity was noticeable—an unwillingness to talk of his past. One evening Mr. and Mrs. Stilson spent at his house, listening with intense interest to his reviews of his sufferings at Ava. They considered themselves highly privileged persons, and they were envied by those who had in vain wished for the same recital from his graphic lips. But alas for him and them! He awoke the next morning to such a sense of mortification that he had, as he said, spent a whole evening talking of himself, that we knew it would not be repeated to any others of us.

"I will close my reminiscences with one very precious to me. It is of his voice in prayer, as he asked for our children and our children's children to the latest generation, that they might be in the service of Christ until one after another they should reach the gates of glory."

An episode in the early experiences of Mr. and Mrs. Stevens in Moulmein was a fire, of incendiary origin, by which their frail home was consumed. In a recent letter Mrs. Stevens has given a graphic description of the incident, and a part of the story given in her own words will be of interest in this connection. Referring to the morning of the fire, she says:

"About 3 A. M. I heard 'Ahem' three times under my window. I touched your father, saying, 'I think there is a thief around trying to see if we are awake.' Your father listened; he heard a crackling, went to the back part of the house, and found the thatch roof in a blaze. Most calmly he returned to our room, said 'There is a fire, get up.' He was so quiet in his manner that at first I did not suppose it our own house, and on finding it to be so, in quite a composed way went from one little bed to another and led the children down the front steps; we were soon over to Mr. Stilson's. Your father's first thought after he had 'counted' us all at the foot of the steps was to save the neighborhood, and so he rushed to the destruction of the thatch roof which connected us with our cook-house; had that taken fire the Burman house next to it would have communicated (the flames) with the village. Our losses were innumerable, and in many ways unreplaceable. My nearest and dearest was a very beautiful miniature of my mother."

With reference to the now sainted Stilson, I remember hearing in my childhood my mother tell the thrilling story of how when Mr. Stilson was mission treasurer he was attacked in his house by native robbers, and how the strong, undaunted man, though alone and weaponless, fought and beat off the marauders. Of this nocturnal battle Mr. Stilson bore the honorable scars down to his grave.

Very soon after Mr. Stevens set foot on Burman soil the active duties of his missionary service began. He

at once began the acquirement of the native tongue, and he must have laid the foundations deep, for throughout his life he exhibited a wonderful proficiency and accuracy in the use of the Burmese language. Until his first return to America in 1854 Mr. Stevens was located at Moulmein, and made that place the center of his missionary activities. In 1834 Dr. Judson had completed his translation of the Bible into the Burman tongue, and in 1840, a little less than two years after the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Stevens in Burma, a second and revised edition was issued in quarto form. After the death of Dr. Judson, the latest emendations in the matter of translation were in the custody of Mr. Stevens and afterward by him incorporated in later editions of the Burman Bible. To him also Dr. Judson committed his MS. of the Burmese dictionary which he had prepared. Mr. Stevens rendered important service in bringing out and issuing this dictionary, for Dr. Judson's MS. was in pencil and part of it so written and interlined as to be scarcely legible. This highly important work was issued from the press in 1852, about two years subsequent to the death of its distinguished author, which occurred April 12, 1850. Work of this character taxes the resources of the highest scholarship, and is indicative of the importance of sending to the foreign field men of trained minds, as well as of piety; men not only of goodness and grace, but of capacity and scholarship as well, for some of the most important work a missionary can do lies in the direction of care-

ful and accurate translation. To do this well one must be able to enter thoroughly into the genius of the language into which, as well as of the one from which, a work is rendered.

In 1852 occurred the second Burmese war with the British. The first was in 1823, when the King of Burma, ignorant and arrogant, in a frenzy of blind and fatuous pride started a military expedition northward, having for its object the capture of Calcutta. For his temerity the English punished him smartly by capturing Rangoon, Burma's main seaport, and from that vantage-ground dictating terms by which the provinces of Tenasserim and Arakan were wrested from the unwilling hands of his humbled and astonished majesty. By 1852 another king was sitting on the throne of Burma, and the lesson of 1823 had to be repeated. Rangoon was again seized by the British. This time it was retained and with it the rich province of Pegu, of which Rangoon was the capital. The capture of this city was a very important event in the history of Burman missions, for it brought the missionaries laboring in Pegu under the protection of the English flag, and thus facilitated the prosecution of missionary endeavor in Burma and the uplifting in that heathen soil of the standard of the Cross.

In 1854 Mr. Stevens and his wife, after an absence of seventeen years, revisited their native land for the enjoyment of a well-earned furlough. Previously, in 1852, they had sent home their two eldest children, Edward and Sarah, in the care of Mr. and Mrs.

Cephas Bennett. The Bennetts, highly valued friends and co-laborers, were returning to America for a brief respite from missionary toil, and with great kindness conducted the children to their friends in America. Two others of their children, wee boys, my parents had laid away in the cemetery at Moulmein. When they left Burma they brought with them four children, two girls and two boys, the youngest a babe ten months old. The voyage home was saddened by the illness and death of little Henry, a child about three years old, and whom they laid to sleep in the Abney Park Cemetery, London.

When my father went back to Burma in 1857 he was stationed at Rangoon, which was thenceforward the center of his activities, and it was a busy life he led in that city, which during his residence in it grew from a native city of comparative insignificance to its present proportions as a large cosmopolitan city of great commercial importance.

Upon a missionary to-day—as upon that earlier ambassador to the Gentiles, Paul—falls the general oversight of all the churches established within the limits of his station. Moreover, he is constantly called upon to assist in the organization of native churches, and their native pastors look to him for help and counsel. Besides this general work of superintendence, Mr. Stevens was for many years pastor of the Rangoon English Baptist church. In addition to his preaching and pastoral labors, he had much editorial work to do in connection with the "Burman Messenger," a monthly

religious paper published in the native language. He also at stated seasons of the year gave a course of regular theological instruction to young natives who were preparing to preach the gospel to their countrymen. The following summary of his literary labors is furnished by his son-in-law, Dr. Smith: "At the urgent request of J. R. Colvin, Esq., then commissioner of Tenasserim, Mr. Stevens translated for the use of schools from the 'Instructor' the elements of general history, in two volumes, octavo, aggregating upward of four hundred pages. Besides a number of tracts, some of which have been and still are very much in request, Dr. Stevens prepared commentaries on Matthew, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, the only commentaries on the Scriptures ever printed in the Burmese language; a translation of Dr. Barth's 'Church History,' and a small volume, entitled 'Scripture Lands.' The Burmese hymn book contains eighty-four hymns bearing his initials. Many of these are translations of hymns dear to all Christians who sing in the English tongue, such as 'Rock of Ages,' 'There is a fountain filled with blood,' 'My dear Redeemer and my Lord,' 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' 'Jerusalem, the Golden,' 'All hail the power of Jesus' name,' etc."

Moreover, until advancing years and the pressure of other duties compelled him reluctantly to relinquish the habit, he was accustomed to make annual trips into the jungles in order to preach the gospel in distant native villages. These jungle trips were seasons of great joy to him, for it was his chief delight to tell to

those who had never heard it "the old, old story." In the earlier days of the mission, before the introduction of steamers and railways into Burma, the usual modes of conveyance from station to station were either a rude bullock cart over execrable roads, or by river in a native boat, this latter a small, cramped craft, constructed of teak wood and propelled by oars. Before starting on a jungle trip the missionary would bargain with the native owner of one of these "little ships" for the use of his boat during the weeks required for the proposed trip. Then boatmen were hired and the boat furnished with the necessary provisions and bedding. Thus equipped and laden with a supply of Testaments and tracts, the missionary would embark upon his "little ship." As the influence of the tide is felt far up the Irawadi River, in going up the stream the boatman must take advantage of a favorable tide, and when the tide turns the boat is moored to await another change. So, having set out for some distant village, which it might require a week or two to reach by boat, father was accustomed to utilize the hours of enforced waiting for change of tide by going up the banks of the stream and into the streets of some wild jungle town adjacent to the spot where the boat was tied, and entering into conversation with some native; soon a crowd would be gathered about the white stranger to hear what he had to say. To this company would be told the story of the Cross, and the eager listeners were urged to accept a salvation freely offered. Then tracts were distributed to those

who would promise to read and the missionary passed on, perhaps soon to collect another group, in whose darkened hearts he would also seek to implant the germs of truth, and then hasten down to his boat to resume the voyage. Thus much precious seed of the kingdom was patiently and faithfully sown on these trips.

Sometimes the seed thus sown germinated and sprang up; but perhaps it would be long years before the fruitage was apparent. Let me adduce an incident illustrative of this, related by my father in a letter, descriptive of a missionary journey which he had recently made. Speaking of a visit to Pegu, he says: "One of the recent converts, on coming to see me, said, with much pleasure expressed in his countenance: 'Teacher, the deer which was stricken so many years ago at Thai-byoo was not brought down till my removal to this place.' He referred to a night which I passed in the village named, ten or twelve years before, when a word which I spoke caught his attention and has been working in him ever since, until, under the preaching of our brother (a native pastor), it has brought him to a full submission to Christ." Many others, especially in recent years, and since my father's death, have borne similar testimony to his instrumentality in implanting in their hearts the good seed of the Kingdom, when as a sower this man of God went forth to sow on the river bank or by the wayside in the jungle village.

In 1864 Brown University, his *alma mater*, conferred upon Edward A. Stevens the degree of Doctor of

Divinity. In 1874 Dr. Stevens and his wife returned to their homeland for a season of rest and recuperation, a relaxation from incessant toil compelled by a failure of my father's health. After about two years spent in this land he again bade farewell to kindred and country, and with renewed vigor turned his face toward the distant "morning-land." Ten years more of service were given to him ; then came a period, owing to ill health, of unaccustomed service, for he was often compelled to stand and wait. In December of 1885 he was seized by the illness which proved a messenger to convey him from the land of the dying to the land of the living. Soon he was to be made perfect, but it was appointed that the worn missionary should be made so through suffering. And so there intervened long months of weary, painful waiting on the Lord's will ere the change came and the Master said, "It is enough." The nature of the disease was such that it caused a serious affection of the heart, hence his friends soon saw that the period of active physical exertion was forever gone; still they hoped that a few years of quiet literary work might still be accorded to him. This hope was, however, to fail of fruition, for on the nineteenth of June, 1886, between the hours of four and five in the morning, he went home; not this time to that land of his birth beyond the tossing Indian Ocean and the heaving Atlantic, but to his eternal home on that happy shore far beyond the sound of the breakers that roll with ceaseless moan upon the shores of time. And was it not fitting that the spirit

of the dear pilgrim should depart as the light of dawn was shining in the eastern sky? For it was to the land of the morning that he had given the best of his days. It had been the joy of his life to watch the breaking of the morning light upon a nation shrouded in the gloom of heathen night. It was to the land of endless morn that he went. Life said not to him, "good-night," but in some brighter clime bade him "good-morning."

The funeral services were held in the Rangoon Baptist Church, which could scarcely contain the throng that gathered to pay their last tribute of respect to the beloved missionary. The portion of the service in the Burman language was conducted by Rev. A. T. Rose, D. D., a faithful fellow-missionary to the Burmese, and that in English by Rev. L. J. Denchfield, then pastor of the church. And then, as it was written long ago of another, "devout men carried Stephen to his burial," so it was with him. He was laid to rest, as was fitting, in the soil of Burma, the land for which he had prayed and toiled, and he sleeps in the mission cemetery of Rangoon, not far from the resting-place of his late and well-beloved co-worker, Cephas Bennett.

As I think of the "blessed sleep" of my godly father I am reminded of the words written by the Dreamer of Bedford Jail: "The pilgrim they laid in a large upper chamber whose window opened toward the sun-rising; the name of the chamber was Peace, where he slept till break of day, and then he awoke and sang."

Dr. Stevens left six children. One, Mrs. Smith, has already been alluded to. Another daughter, Emma, has but lately (in April, 1896), left us to meet her sainted father on the golden strand. His eldest born, the Rev. Edward Oliver Stevens, between whom and his father existed a singular unity of thought and purpose, devotedly following in the footsteps of his godly father, is stationed as a missionary in Moulmein, his own birthplace, and the scene of the elder Stevens' earliest missionary toils. The other three children, two daughters and a son, live and labor in America.

We have thus far hurriedly traced the course of this life-stream from its apparent spring amid the plantations of Georgia until on heathen shores it goes beyond our ken. Consider now a few of the traits and characteristics of the man.

There was one feature of his work concerning which I ask leave to speak lest it be forgotten, and that was its accuracy. Dr. Stevens' work in Burma was characterized by the same careful scholarship for which his college course was marked. He acquired a remarkable facility in the use of the Burmese language, so that if he had to prepare a discourse in the native tongue, he thought it out in Burmese; hence it was unnecessary for him to translate their language when he came to transcribe his ideas upon paper. This facility and accuracy in the use of the language of the natives much enhanced the value of his missionary labors, especially in the direction of literary effort.

But I wish more particularly to allude to some of the

spiritual traits which adorned and ennobled the character of the man. And the first to which I may refer was his prayerfulness. From boyhood until the moment when for him prayer was changed to ceaseless praise, he was pre-eminently a man of prayer. Unlike too many others, for him prayer was never a duty perfunctorily performed; it was rather a prized and precious privilege.

It seemed an easy thing for him to "get the King's ear," for his walk was close with God and it was a delight for him to commune with his Heavenly Father, to talk with his Saviour.

As illustrative of this characteristic I remember a hillock in Newton Centre which, in my boyhood, was pointed out to me as having once been called "Stevens' Knoll," because of my father's habit when a student at the seminary of retiring there for uninterrupted prayer. As further illustrating this devotional spirit, I quote a few lines from a manuscript in his own handwriting: "I wish to bear my testimony," he says, "of the faithfulness of God to the promise 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh unto you.' Often in the chamber, in some retired building, or in the woods both in this country and in Burma, have I taken hold of that promise, and calling upon him, have felt that indeed he came to me and deigned to grant me intimate intercourse with himself, so that I felt I was conversing with him. And at the close it has sometimes seemed to me as was said of Abraham of old, 'He went up from him in the place where he talked with him.' "

Again, speaking of an experience in Milledgeville, Georgia, during his last visit to this country, he says: "On retiring I soon feel asleep. How long after I cannot tell, for I had no means of ascertaining the time, I awoke and was sensible of a peculiar disposition to pray; and yielding to it as I prayed it seemed as though the Lord came down to me. I felt that I was indeed talking with him; tears flowed profusely; I poured out all my heart to him, thanking him that he should thus have deigned to visit me."

This beautiful ruling passion was strong even as his feet were on the banks of the stormy Jordan. On the Monday night before he crossed to the farther shore, after it was supposed by the loving watchers at his side that he would never speak to or recognize them again, he broke forth into a long, earnest, and beautiful prayer, much of it clothed in the language of Scripture, and closing with strong assurances of the ultimate triumph of that name which is above every name, repeating the phrases, "his name," "For the honor of his name," "to the glory of his name."

The final words of this prayer suggest another marked feature of his soul life, and that was his love for his Saviour. This love was the controlling purpose in his life. Once when dining with some friends in Philadelphia, a young man asked him: "Why go back? Why not, after a life of toilful service on heathen shores, spend the evening of your days in well-earned rest in your native land?" To this inquiry Dr. Stevens promptly replied: "The love of Christ con-

straineth us." This simple but sincere answer made a deep and lasting impression on those present.

This servant of Jesus Christ lived in intimate fellowship with his Divine Master. To him the exalted and glorified Jesus was not a friend afar off, but a dear elder brother close at hand. A dream which he once had, beautifully, I think, illustrates the love of this disciple for his Lord. In his dream my father seemed to see a prostrate human form, which he recognized as that of his blessed Lord, subjected to insult and indignity; hastening to where the body lay, he prostrated himself before it, repeating while the tears rolled down his cheeks, "My Lord! my Lord!" And then as he gazed upon it the eyes opened and looked graciously upon him, and the voice of the Lord said, "You are Edward Stevens." From this dream father awoke bathed in tears, but overjoyed at the precious thought that the Lord had named his name and owned him as one of his. In after days he wrote concerning this dream: "I can never recur to it but the impression it made is renewed. Oh, to be owned by Christ! For him to call my name!"

These words remind me of the humility of this man of God. I think in this respect he had in him eminently the mind which also was in the Lord Jesus. In lowliness of mind he ever thought others better than himself. And because of this humble spirit he was never on the lookout for slight or injury, and it helped to make him charitable in his judgments of others and ready to put the best possible construction upon their motives.

There is just one other characteristic to which I may be permitted to refer, and that was his devotion to his work. He was heart and soul in it, and restless when in any way turned aside from it. With rare singleness of aim this one thing he did, he wrought for the salvation of the Burman race. And even in the seasons of needed rest and recuperation passed in his native land, he constantly felt, to use his own phraseology, that "he would go back with a bound."

He had a broad, catholic spirit; every effort put forth for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom had an interest for him; the cause of missions everywhere, at home and abroad, was dear to his heart. But as for himself, he had received a commission to preach the gospel to the Burmans, and his whole soul was afire with zeal for the reconciliation to God of that people to whom he felt himself an ambassador from Christ. And when the King summoned this ambassador home to the court of heaven, he was almost loth to go, for he desired to stay a little longer, if so be that he might do a little more for Burma before his departure.

Once during his last illness he said: "I feel that I am going to be better and do some more work. The rest of eternity will be great, but I want to work a little longer." But in that last, long, audible prayer before he died, he commenced by saying: "I have served thee a long time, and if thou sayest it is enough, thy will be done." And so, though he would willingly have tarried, he bowed submissive to the Divine will.

The following treasured note was addressed to his

son in America (then a pastor in Fargo, North Dakota), and was the last direct communication received by that son from his far-away father. It was written on a postal card.

RANGOON, March 5, 1886.

MY DEAR S.:

I am very glad to be able to write and say to you I am much better again, but I still have need to be very cautious of my movements. When one gets so near to the Jordan that he thinks he can almost discover the other side, the natural consequence is self-examination. Well if he then can say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed," etc. May that be your privilege and mine. Yours affectionately,

E. A. STEVENS.

Do I seem to have overdrawn the beauty of this father's character? It is not claimed that that character was flawless or faultless. And yet I think that in that day when the Lord shall make up his jewels there will be found in the treasury few gems of purer ray than the soul of Edward Abiel Stevens.

In concluding this hasty sketch of my father's career and character, let me introduce a few touches from the pencil of one uninfluenced by ties of sonship or other kinship. They are an extract from a sermon preached to his own people by Rev. William Kidd, pastor of the Rangoon Presbyterian Church. Mr. Kidd says: "He appeared to me to be like Nathanael in the guilelessness and humbleness of his spirit; like St. John in the affectionateness and amiableness of his disposition; like St. Paul in the earnestness and steadfastness of his faith, and like Christ in the gentleness

and meekness of his manner. He was like Christ too, in the tenderness and charitableness of his heart."

Pre-eminent was he for polite manners and Christian courtesy, and so with us who loved him as husband or father, and with those who knew and respected him as a friend, "he bore without abuse the grand old name of gentleman."

On the last Tuesday evening before he fell asleep, as there was wafted to his ear the evening hymn of Christian Karens at their worship, he aroused and said: "How sweet such sounds in a land like this." Ah, my father! Still sweeter sounds hast thou now heard, in a better, that is to say a heavenly, country. The voices of the redeemed Burmans, by thee pointed to the Lamb of God, and now attuned to the matchless music of the new song, have greeted thy ravished ear. Thou hast heard the ceaseless chant of angel and archangel about the throne. But better than all, doubtless thou hast heard a voice loved more than all saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

After the burial they planted beside his "low, green tent, whose curtain never outward swings," a palm tree, and its branches now wave above the form of the sleeping soldier of Christ. Fitting, beautiful symbol! For it speaks of glorious victory and reminds us of that multitude which no man can number, and with which that worn warrior is gathered, "clothed with white robes and palms in their hands."

In March, 1896, there was unveiled in the stately

Judson Memorial Church, New York City, a stained-glass window, placed there by the children and other relatives and friends of the subject of this sketch. And on the occasion an appropriate sermon on the life and work of the deceased missionary was preached by Edward Judson, D. D. It seemed fitting that in the beautiful church, which is a memorial of the elder Judson, there should thus be placed a window in memory of one who was in the early days of the mission to Burma a companion and true yokefellow of the great pioneer missionary to that distant tropic land. On the memorial window is the following inscription:

In Memory of

EDWARD ABIEL STEVENS, D. D.,

For nearly half a century a Missionary to Burma.

BORN IN LIBERTY COUNTY, GA., JAN. 14, 1814,
HE DIED IN RANGOON, JUNE 19, 1886.

"*An ambassador is sent among the heathen.*" OBAD. 1.

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